

Celebrating Plain Language at the National Institutes of Health

CLEAR AND TO THE POINT

Answer your reader's questions

Use language appropriate for your reader

Include only necessary details

Use the active voice

Use personal pronouns such as "we" and "you"

Use short sentences and paragraphs

Use tables, lists, and other easy-to-understand design features

Celebrating Plain Language at the National Institutes of Health

Lipsett Amphitheater

April 19, 2006

Welcome Susan Persons

Chair, NIH Plain Language Coordinating Committee

Opening Remarks Elias Zerhouni, M.D.

Director, NIH

Introduction of Speaker Ann Brewer

Deputy Director, Executive Secretariat

The Communication Index Burkey Belser

Award-Winning Design Consultant and

FDA Food Label Wizard

Presentation of Awards Elias Zerhouni, M.D., and Susan Persons

Closing Remarks Susan Persons

Please join us for light refreshments after the ceremony

OUTSTANDING

BIOMEDICAL BEAT E-NEWSLETTER— JUNE 21, 2005 (NIGMS)

This e-mail version of the electronic newsletter *Biomedical Beat* provides its audience with the latest advances in basic biomedical medicine by researchers supported by NIGMS. It is a gateway to the Web version, which offers complete summaries and additional resources for those who want to know more.

Emily Carlson, M.A. Alison Davis, Ph.D. Craig Hicks Karin Jegalian, Ph.D. Kirstie Saltsman, Ph.D.

THE DIABETIC EYE DISEASE: AN EDUCATOR'S GUIDE (NEI)

This patient education tool, designed to help diabetes educators, uses everyday words to convey important messages to people with diabetes. The flipchart format engages the reader and the patient in an interactive teaching environment.

Rosemary Janiszewski, M.S., CHES

ENFERMEDAD DIABÉTICA DEL OJO: UNA GUÍA PARA EL EDUCADOR (NEI)

Enfermedad diabética del ojo: Una guía para el educador is the Spanish version of *The Diabetic Eye Disease*: An Educator's Guide. It provides the same important messages to Spanish-speaking patients. Its careful layout and organization make it easy to use as an education tool.

Rosemary Janiszewski, M.S., CHES Leslie Rivera, M.A.

GRAPHIC STANDARDS FOR USE OF NCI LOGO AND GRAPHIC IDENTITY ELEMENTS (NCI)

Because the NCI logo reflects the Institute's scientific and professional stature and represents the NCI's "face" to the public, it is important to preserve its graphic integrity. This manual uses excellent graphics, prominent headings, and spacious presentation of topics to illustrate its message.

Donna Bonner
Paul R. LaMasters
Malka Scher, Ph.D., J.D.
Walt Burroughs
Del Harrod
Kathryn Hollen
Elizabeth Johnson
David Fridberg

To write simply is as difficult as to be good.

Somerset Maugham

HELPING PATIENTS WHO DRINK TOO MUCH: A CLINICIAN'S GUIDE (NIAAA)

The NIAAA created this Guide, in its full-size and pocket versions, to help clinicians identify and care for patients with heavy drinking and alcohol use disorders. *The Guide* provides a simplified, logical, research-based approach to alcohol screening and intervention for both primary care and mental health clinicians.

Mark Willenbring, M.D. Maureen Gardner Dianne Miller, M.P.A.

LOOKING OUT FOR OUR HEALTH: WE HAVE THE POWER TO SLOW KIDNEY DISEASE (NIDDK)

Both diabetes and one of its complications, kidney disease, are widespread among American Indians. This DVD is designed to raise awareness of kidney disease and measures that people with diabetes can take to prevent or slow its onset. It details risk factors and urges prevention in a culturally-sensitive format using plain talk.

Robert Nelson, M.D.
Jennifer Weil, M.D.
Toni Press-Coffman
Etheleen Osif
Salt River Dialysis Support Group
Members of Native American Communities

NKDEP FAMILY REUNION INITIATIVE (NIDDK)

This outreach Web site was developed for African Americans planning or attending family reunions. This educational and informative tool, for use by the lay person, provides support in discussing the connection between diabetes, high blood pressure, and kidney disease during family gatherings. It contains three easy-to-understand guides that outline ways to share kidney disease information with family members.

Elisa Gladstone, M.P.H. Thomas Hostetter, M.D. Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide

SAFE USE OF MEDICINES: TAKE YOUR MEDICINES THE RIGHT WAY—EACH DAY! (NIA)

This beautiful and colorful brochure provides information to help older adults take their medicines properly. The accompanying cup can be used for the water needed to take medicine and cleverly contains a reinforcement message urging the proper use of medicine. It does an excellent job of keeping the message simple and to the point.

Freddi Karp, M.P.A. Stephanie Dailey, M.A. Tamara Jones, Ph.D. Jann Keenan, Ed.S.

17-YEAR-OLD ENLIGHTENS NIH SCIENTISTS ON PROTEIN STRUCTURE PREDICTION (NIGMS)

This engaging and well-written article from the *NIH Record* tells the story of a 17-year-old researcher who gave a talk sponsored by NIGMS. The article is a moving story about a young man who may one day apply for NIH support. Emily Carlson, M.A.

VOICES FROM OUR COMMUNITIES: MESSAGES OF HOPE (NIDDK)

This culturally-sensitive calendar addresses the highest risk group for diabetes—American Indians—with simple, clear testimonials, and practical information. It provides daily reminders to users to eat a healthy diet, stay physically active, and to honor their traditions and communities by choosing to keep themselves healthy.

Mary Hoskin, M.S., M.P.H. Suzan Murphy, M.P.H., R.D. Members of Pima, Zuni, Navaho, Ponca, Hopi, and Tono O'odham Indian communities

WE CAN! FAMILIES FINDING A BALANCE: A PARENT HANDBOOK (NHLBI)

This positive and upbeat handbook was developed to meet the perceived lack of materials for parents needing practical, everyday tips for helping their children stay at a healthy weight. The guide offers tips and fun activities to help achieve the goal behaviors of the WeCan! Program: improved food choices, increased physical activity, and reduced time in front of the television.

Karen Donato, R.D.

WHEN CANCER RETURNS: SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WITH CANCER (NCI)

When Cancer Returns beautifully and sensitively addresses the emotional and physical challenges experienced by patients who have recurrent cancer. It outlines basic information regarding cancer recurrence, managing side effects, advance directives, coping with feelings, and communicating with the health care team, family members, and friends.

Louise Cunningham, M.P.H. Lori Keesey Susan Spangler Rhonda Wilt DeJoice, B.A. Melinda Moyer, M.S.

EXCELLENT

BIOMEDICAL BEAT ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER—AUGUST 16, 2005 (NIGMS)

The Web version of the electronic newsletter *Biomedical Beat* offers a glimpse of the latest advances in basic biomedical medicine by researchers supported by NIGMS. The newsletter offers short summaries of news items, images, and links to additional resources.

Emily Carlson, M.A. Alison Davis, Ph.D. Craig Hicks Karin Jegalian, Ph.D. Alisa Machalek, M.S.

DEALING WITH THE UPS AND DOWNS OF DIABETES—TIPS FOR TEENS WITH TYPE 2 DIABETES (NIDDK)

This colorful, easy-to-read tip sheet encourages teens with type 2 diabetes to feel okay about themselves and their diabetes. It provides tips to help teens with type 2 diabetes deal with the ups and downs of diabetes—to reach out and get support from others, to involve their families and health care teams, and to take action to manage the disease for a long and healthy life.

Joanne Gallivan, M.S., R.D. Elizabeth Warren-Boulton, R.N.

DISCOVER NURSING RESEARCH (NINR)

Discover Nursing Research is an interactive, menu-driven video CD-ROM program directed at nursing students and others interested in learning about nursing research. Through interviews, the program seeks to explain, in simple terms, what nursing research is, who does it, and how it improves the scientific basis of nursing care.

Daniel O'Neal III, M.A., A.P.R.N., B.C. Lanny Newman

THE FAMILY BUSINESS— SEPTEMBER 2005 FINDINGS (NIGMS)

This Findings article features a scientist who uses computers to predict the shapes of proteins and also discusses his life both in and out of the lab. It uses creative metaphors and is written in a colloquial style that is interesting and yet easy to understand with its use of plain language throughout.

Emily Carlson, M.A.

If it takes a lot of words to say what you have in mind, give it more thought.

Dennis Roth

FAST FACTS (EASY-TO-READ SERIES) IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH (NIAMS)

NIAMS developed this educational series to honor its commitment to provide the general public with convenient and easy-to-understand health information, and to better serve the Spanish-speaking population.

Leslie McIntire, M.A. Robert Miranda-Acevedo, M.P.A.

INSIDE—NIDCD ONLINE NEWSLETTER (NIDCD)

Since 1997, *Inside* is a a reliable resource for NIDCD's constituents to keep on top of activities, available resources, and research advances of the Institute. This newly redesigned online version adds a fresh look that complements other NIDCD outreach pieces while making full use of the communication strengths of the Internet.

Patricia Blessing, B.S. Mia Esserman, M.L.S. Mary Sullivan, M.S. Jennifer Wenger, M.A.

NCI OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS ORIENTATION RESOURCES (NCI)

Orientation Resources is a clear and concise Web link on the NCI Office of Communications (OC) Intranet that enables new employees to get all the information needed about administrative and personnel issues. This site answers specific OC questions that the NCI orientation program does not cover and also links to other NCI and NIH resources.

Robyn Bason, B.S.
Cheryl Burg, M.A., A.G.S., M.S.
Ilene Holly Burstyn
Kevin Broun, M.L.I.S.
Nina Ghanem, M.Ed., CHES
Tanisha Gregory
Cindy Lollar, M.A.A., M.F.A.
Sahil Malik, B.S.
Henry Ostapiej, B.S., M.S.
Nicole Saiontz, M.H.S.
Valerie Secker, M.P.A.

NIAID EXTRAMURAL STAFF TRAINING—ELECTRONIC ANNOUNCEMENTS (NIAID)

This self-learning training module uses clear writing to explain exactly what the reader needs to know about Program Officer responsibilities without unnecessary words or expressions. It is easily understood because of its use of active voice, logical organization, and easy-to-read design features.

Christine Rumney, B.S.

NIH AMONG FIRST TO USE NEW ELECTRONIC FOLDER SYSTEM (OD/OCPL)

This article from the *NIH Record* describes a new human resource tool for NIH employees. It is logically organized, concise, and uses clear language and understandable terms to communicate to all readers.

Carla Garnett, M.A.

QUICK TOURS: SEARCHING MEDICAL LITERATURE DATABASES (NLM)

The *Quick Tours* are a growing set of online tutorials designed to train biomedical researchers, clinicians, medical librarians, and others in using PubMed[®] and the NLM Catalog to find biomedical literature. It is uniquely animated with audio narration and shows a "click by click" demonstration of each search technique.

Janet Zipser, M.L.S. Annette Nahin Katherine Majewski, M.L.S. Andrea Demsey, M.L.S.

Think like a wise man but communicate in the language of the people.

William Butler Yeats

THE SCIENCE OF ENERGY BALANCE (OD/OSP)

The Science of Energy Balance is an interactive teaching unit curriculum supplement that combines cutting-edge research discoveries from NIH with state-of-the-art instructional materials. In this supplement, geared toward middle school education, students investigate energy intake and energy output as they develop their understanding of energy balance.

Bruce Fuchs, Ph.D.
William Mowczko, M.A.
Lisa Strauss
Cindy Allen, M.A.
Van Hubbard, M.D., Ph.D.
Jean Pennington, Ph.D., R.D.
BSCS
SAIC

UNDERSTANDING CANCER (NCI)

This clear, logically organized bilingual tutorial provides nursing students a broad overview of cancer, including what is suspected to cause the disease, how it is detected and diagnosed, and how risk can be reduced.

Donna Kerrigan, M.S. Miguel Monroy Jeanne Kelly, B.F.A.

WOMEN SCIENTISTS WITH DISABILITIES (OD/OSP)

The Office of Science Education created this innovative video and its accompanying poster to encourage young girls with disabilities to think about a science career. The video's powerful interviews of three female scientists with disabilities speak for themselves. After watching the video, the viewer will come out with realistic questions—do I have the talent, do I have the ability and interest, and most importantly, do I have the drive?

Gloria Seelman, M.D. Catherine Beck Shoup, M.A.

WORKING WITH YOUR OLDER PATIENT: A CLINICIAN'S HANDBOOK (NIA)

The Clinician's Handbook is written for clinicians who work with older people providing language they can use to communicate more effectively with their older patients. Based on the latest doctor/patient communication research, the handbook provides clinicians with skills essential to caring for older people and their families.

Janice Lynch Shuster Freddi Karp, M.P.A.

YOUR GUIDE TO DIABETES: TYPE 1 AND TYPE 2 (NIDDK)

This clearly written booklet provides essential information to patients with Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes in a positive, encouraging tone using personal pronouns, active voice, everyday terms, and direct sentences.

Kathy Kranzfelder, M.A. Ellen Schwab, M.S., R.D., C.D.E.

Anybody can have ideas—the difficulty is to express them without squandering a quire of paper on an idea that ought to be reduced to one glittering paragraph.

Mark Twain

HONORABLE MENTION

AGING HEARTS AND ARTERIES: A SCIENTIFIC QUEST (NIA)

This booklet takes a complicated topic and makes it understandable for readers who do not have a specific background in aging and cardiovascular research. The illustrations help clarify especially complex points and engage the reader's interest.

Doug Dollemore, B.A. Freddi Karp, M.P.A.

THE BRAIN: OUR SENSE OF SELF (OD/OSP)

This NIH curriculum supplement is one of the interactive teaching units that combines cutting-edge research discoveries from the NIH with state-of-the art instructional materials created by the Office of Science Education. The series is free to teachers and administrators and targets middle-school students.

Bruce Fuchs, Ph.D.
William Mowczko, M.A.
Bonnie Kalberer, M.S.
Cindy Allen, M.A.
Marian Emr
Lynn Hudson, Ph.D.
Michael O'Donovan, Ph.D.
BSCS
SAIC

CCR NETWORKS (NCI)

Written for the scientists, nurses, post-doctoral fellows, and others in the Center for Cancer Research at the NCI, this newsletter covers the activities of their colleagues and is a useful tool for other Government employees to learn about the work of the CCR.

Tracy E. Thompson, B.S., B.A. Robin Moore, M.B.A. Joan Barbour, B.S. Cathy Kristiansen, M.A.

COMMON BREAST CHANGES (NCI)

The use of everyday words helps women understand the common breast changes that occur with aging that may be found during an exam or mammogram. Follow-up steps to address these changes or check for cancer are explained in a very helpful and straightforward manner.

Breast Cancer Education Team Rhonda Wilt DeJoice, B.A. Sona Thakkar, M.A. Laura Boyle, M.P.H., CHES Rose Mary Padberg, R.N., M.A. Susan Spangler

THE COOL SPOT: THE YOUNG TEEN'S PLACE FOR INFORMATION ON ALCOHOL AND RESISTING PEER PRESSURE (NIAAA)

The Cool Spot uses engaging games and graphics to deliver important messages about the risks of underage drinking and ways to resist peer pressure. Each self-contained component on this Web site is easy to use and easy to navigate.

Maureen Gardner Diane Miller, M.P.A.

FY 04 ANNUAL REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (NCI)

This attractively designed report from the NCI at Frederick contains important information about treatment for cancer and AIDS. The layout, the use of white space, the colors, and the font size all go together to make this an easy read.

Bob Anderson Donna Bell David Butler, B.A., M.B.A. Maritta Grau, B.A., M.A. Ken Michaels, A.A.S.

Do not be tempted by a twenty-dollar word when there is a ten-center handy, ready, and able.

William Strunk, Jr.

GENETICS HOME REFERENCE (NLM)

The Genetics Home Reference is the National Library of Medicine's Web site for consumer information about genetic conditions and the genes or chromosomes responsible for these conditions. The Question and Answer format provides useful information to patients and their families in language that is easy to understand.

Genetics Home Reference Project Team

IMMUNE SYSTEM (NCI)

Written for health professionals, this bilingual Web site outlines what is known about the key components of the immune system and how this knowledge improves cancer therapy.

Donna Kerrigan, M.S. Miguel Monroy Jeanne Kelly, B.F.A.

IS IT A COLD OR ALLERGY? (NIAID)

This flyer is written in both English and Spanish and is useful for posting in doctors' offices and clinics. It clearly outlines, in easy-to-understand language, the differences between colds and allergies and how to treat them.

Ann London

MAESTRO LEON FLEISHER USES "TWO HANDS" TO THANK NIH (NINDS)

This article, published in the *NIH Record*, is the inspirational story of Leon Fleisher's visit to the NIH to thank the NINDS physicians and scientists who treated him for dystonia, a little known disorder. It is a good example of how science and research at the NIH enabled Mr. Fleisher to once again play the piano professionally.

Shannon Garnett, B.A.

MEET THE 2005 KRESHOVER LECTURER: DR. CHARLES SERHAN Clearly written, this interview educates the reader about Dr. Serhan's research on inflammation. It also traces his path from

professional musician to researcher, providing the reader with an engaging, real-life story about how one man chose a career in science.

Bob Kuska, M.S.J.

NCCAM HEADLINE NEWS — SEPTEMBER 2005

NCCAM Headline News is a monthly, Webbased publication developed for the staff of the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine. The result is an eye pleasing and easy-to-read site with engaging stories about the NCCAM staff and their projects.

Karla Ehrler, B.A. Alyssa Cotler, M.P.H. Swati Revankar

NIAID EXTRAMURAL STAFF TRAINING—SUPPLEMENTAL TOOL FOR "USE PLAIN LANGUAGE TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS" (NIAID)

This is part of a modular self-learning system developed to improve writing skills for the NIAID extramural staff. It is an innovative presentation of writing using "before" and "after" examples of how to use plain language.

Christine Rumney, B.S.

NIDA'S GAME PLAN PSA CAMPAIGN (NIDA)

Using a public service announcement, NIDA raises awareness on the dangers of using steroids. The announcement is clearly directed to young athletes, stressing that using what "nature" provides is much better than using steroids with their associated negative side-effects. The message is clear, and certain to capture the attention of the audience.

Public Information Liaison Branch

THE NIGMS FEEDBACK LOOP ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER (NIGMS)

The Web version of the NIGMS Feedback Loop is an innovative way for interaction between NIGMS and the scientific community. Interested readers can take action through this Web site to apply for a grant, attend a meeting, or comment on a document.

Jeremy Berg, Ph.D.
James Deatherage, Ph.D.
Ann Dieffenbach
Craig Hicks
Brian Pike, Ph.D.
Paul Sheehy, Ph.D.
Scott Somers, Ph.D.
Laurie Tompkins, Ph.D.
John Whitmarsh, Ph.D.
Hinda Zlotnik, Ph.D.

NIH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS HANDBOOK (OD/ORS)

This comprehensive handbook is useful for both work and home. The checklists provide easy-to-follow suggestions for possible workplace emergencies, and advise readers on how to develop household emergency plans and emergency preparedness "go-kits".

Michael Spillane Ellen Gary Mary Ann Bell Brad Moss Chris Blankner Kelly Discount Erin Riley Andrea Tennison Bill Magers

He that uses many words for the explaining of any subject doth, like the cuttlefish, hide himself for the most part in his own ink.

John Ray

NIH RECORD (OD/OCPL)

The new improved version of the *NIH Record* is well organized and incorporates easy-to-read design features. The new departments (Features, Briefs, Science, Milestones, Training, Volunteers, and Seen) allow the reader to easily find items of interest.

Rich McManus, B.A. Carla Garnett, M.A. Bonnie Hamalainen, M.F.A.

OCEANS OF DISCOVERY: HOW THE STUDY OF OCEANS CAN IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH (NIEHS)

This fact sheet describes current research conducted by the NIEHS and other agencies on the health risks associated with exposure to marine toxins, as well as the medicinal benefits these toxins may provide. The colorful photographs and brief descriptions of research findings are presented in a way that is easily digested by a lay audience.

John Peterson, B.S.

OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES 3-4-5 FRAMEWORK (OD/ORS)

This newly designed flow chart is an innovative tool that can be used to maintain a standardized and consistent process for the new NIH ethics regulation. NIH users will find that this product is easy to use, read, and follow.

Genia Bohrer, A.A.
David Brightwell, B.S.
Monica Jones
Wanda Malaye, A.A.

PACK HEALTHY IDEAS FOR SUMMER TRIPS/NIH NEWS IN HEALTH (NIDDK)

This short and informative article offers examples of healthy eating while traveling. The language is easy to understand and speaks to the target audience.

Leslie Curtis, M.A.

SHINGLES AGE PAGE (NIA)

The Question and Answer format in this attractive brochure about shingles makes the information easy to understand. Using vignettes is an excellent way to inform older people and caregivers about this painful and often long-lasting illness.

Anne Decker, B.A. Freddi Karp, M.P.A.

SURGERY CHOICES FOR WOMEN WITH EARLY-STAGE BREAST CANCER (NCI)

Making choices about breast cancer treatment is difficult. This educational brochure sensitively provides information to women and assists them in deciding what is the best and right choice for their particular situation. The table is a good way to compare the treatments available, and the questions at the end are a good reminder of items to discuss with a physician.

Lorna Patrick Helen Osborne, M.Ed. Donna Bonner Susan Spangler

Never use a long word when a diminutive one will do. Unqualified superlatives are the worst of all.

■ William Safire

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME— FOR GROWING OLD: TIPS FROM THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON AGING (NIA)

Some older people need a little extra help to be able to stay in their own homes. This fact sheet describes types of help they might find, where to look for it, and what types of financial help might be available. The writing is clean and simple, and the style communicates directly with the intended audience.

Karin Kolsky, B.A. Freddi Karp, M.P.A.

TRAINING IN BASIC BIOMETHODOLOGY FOR LABORATORY MICE (NHGRI)

Written as a training tool to develop proper mouse handling skills, this thorough and well-organized CD is easy to navigate and understand. The training is excellent and clear, and is a good example for use throughout the NIH.

Shelley Hoogstraten-Miller, D.V.M., M.S. Wendy Burns, B.S. Darryl Leja, M.F.A.

UNDERSTANDING CANCER GENOMICS (NCI)

This tutorial introduces health professionals to the breadth of the genomic changes in cancer. Through informative graphics and diagrams, the reader can more easily understand and classify cancers based on a genomic basis.

Donna Kerrigan, M.S. Michelle Bennett, Ph.D. Jeanne Kelly, B.F.A.

USING TECHNOLOGY TO STUDY CELLULAR AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY (OD/OSP AND NINDS)

Using this tutorial, students investigate how technology is used to deepen and broaden knowledge of cellular and molecular biology. The games and imaginative exercises that are incorporated in this product are appropriate for high school students.

Bruce Fuchs, Ph.D.
William Mowczko, M.A.
Cindy Allen, M.A.
Lisa Strauss
Krishan Arora, Ph.D.
BSCS
SAIC

A VIDEO JOURNEY INTO THE WORLD OF NANOTECHNOLOGY IN CANCER (NCI)

This video meets the needs of several audiences, including the general public and the scientific community. The language is easy to understand and with the help of excellent graphics explains why the field of nanotechnology is important to advancing the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of cancer.

LaTonya Kittles Greg Downing, D.O., Ph.D. Travis Earles Stacy Jannie Trish Evans

I think science and writing are utterly the same thing. They are completely rooted in passion an desire, if they're any good at all.

Andrea Barrett

WHAT I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT DIARRHEA (NIDDK)

Following a logical progression of information, this brochure explains why this topic is important and provides information that many people may not know. The readability and simplicity of the language make it a good resource for people of all ages.

Kathy Kranzfelder, M.A. Heather Wallace. M.A.

You write to communicate to the hearts and minds of others what's burning inside you. And we edit to let the fire show through the smoke.

Arthur Polotnik

If you can't write your idea on the back of my calling card, you don't have a clear idea.

David Belasco

http://execsec.od.nih.gov/plainlang

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